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Special theme: Millennium Development Goals and indigenous peoples

Ongoing priorities and themes

Information received from the United Nations system

United Nations Population Fund

United Nations country team in Ecuador

I. United Nations Population Fund

[Original: English]

Summary

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) supports initiatives to promote the respect of human rights, including the reproductive rights, of indigenous peoples. At the country level, programme activities include the development of quality and culturally sensitive reproductive health information and education services with the full participation of indigenous peoples to ensure that the services respond to their needs and respect their rights. At the regional and global levels, UNFPA has contributed actively to the process for establishing and supporting the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

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A. Response to the recommendation of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues to the United Nations Population Fund

1. In compliance with the recommendation, in Ecuador, in November 2005, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and Family Care International assisted the local indigenous non-governmental organizations Jambi Huasi and the Ministry of Health to hold an international seminar on intercultural perspectives for maternal health, with the purpose of promoting the inclusion of an intercultural perspective in health policies relating to reproductive health. The seminar witnessed the sharing of experiences with representatives of other countries such as Bolivia, Panama and Peru.

B. Response to the recommendations of the Forum to bodies of the United Nations system in general

1. All United Nations system bodies should recognize that indigenous cultures are intrinsically connected to indigenous peoples' traditional territories

2. The mission of UNFPA is guided by the programme of action adopted at the International Conference on Population and Development and international and regional human rights instruments. According to the programme of action, Governments should respect the cultures of indigenous people and enable them to have tenure and manage their lands, protect and restore the natural resources and ecosystems on which indigenous communities depend for their survival and well-being and, in consultation with indigenous people, take that into account in the formulation of national population and development policies.

3. All UNFPA programmes concerning indigenous rights recognize the linkages among human rights, population dynamics, sustainable development and the eradication of poverty. In particular, UNFPA, using culturally sensitive approaches, strives for the protection of human rights of vulnerable populations (including indigenous peoples), the empowerment of women in order to reach gender equality and equity and a comprehensive approach to reproductive health. UNFPA also takes into account various religious and ethical values and cultural backgrounds.

2. The concept of development needs to be revised, taking into account full participation, rights and traditional knowledge-practices of indigenous people

4. UNFPA emphasizes the importance of human rights, cultural values and their linkages with population and development, including democracy and good governance, in all policies and programmes. It stresses the need to respect cultural values in the design and implementation of its assistance to activities and in its partnership with key national and international institutions.

5. UNFPA supports initiatives to promote the respect of human rights, including the reproductive rights, of indigenous peoples. At the country level, programme activities include the development of quality and culturally sensitive reproductive health information and education services with the full participation of indigenous peoples, to ensure that the services respond to their needs and respect their rights. At

the regional and global levels, UNFPA has contributed actively to establishing and supporting the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

6. In Brazil, a study was carried out by the Universidade Federal do Amazonas, with the active participation of the native Brazilians themselves. The report was a preliminary analysis of the living conditions of approximately 8,500 indigenous people who live in 91 Sateré-Mawé settlements (approximately 1,600 families) along the shores of major rivers and creeks of the Andirá-Marau area.

7. On the basis of the above-mentioned study, the university, with the support of UNFPA and UNICEF, published *Sateré-Mawé. The Portrait of an Indigenous People* in 2005. The book documents the low quality of prenatal services, the low coverage of birth registration and the gradual disappearance of the Sateré-Mawé language.

8. The study also highlighted the high illiteracy rates, the massive adoption of non-indigenous religions, the economic importance of the production and trade of guarana (a coffee-like stimulant) for the Sateré-Mawé's subsistence, the significant migration to urban areas, the end of fishing as a traditional activity and the gradual changes in economic dynamics throughout the indigenous territory.

9. Perhaps the most significant impact of the sociodemographic diagnosis has been the increased knowledge and space for the critical reflection it has provided of Sateré-Mawé culture by the indigenous people themselves. The Sateré-Mawé, who participated actively as interviewers in the study, are now involved in raising awareness of its results. The report will also be translated into the Sateré-Mawé language, thus becoming accessible to many indigenous chieftains, teachers and health providers, thus furthering a process of change from within.

10. In Ecuador, UNFPA and other United Nations bodies work together to reduce inequities and exclusion related to ethnic issues and have made explicit efforts to introduce an intercultural perspective in their country programmes and projects. An intercultural theme group, chaired by UNFPA, has been created in order to link such a perspective to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (see sect. II below).

11. The theme group undertook a mapping exercise in order to identify the national institutions that implement programmes that benefit indigenous peoples and the needs and interests of indigenous organizations. A document on the relevance of an intercultural perspective was adopted by the United Nations country team. As a follow-up, the team has invited different indigenous leaders to make recommendations for more relevant United Nations assistance. The theme group continues collaboration with indigenous organizations and assists them in the dissemination of information and special celebrations.

12. In addition, in coordination with UNDP and the human rights institutional strengthening project of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, in 2005 UNFPA supported the preparation and participation of an indigenous delegate in the Forum.

13. In Panama, UNFPA supports the Ngobe people in promoting and advocating their right to health (including reproductive health), education and development, in general, and assisted other United Nations bodies in the establishment of a bipartite council on indigenous issues that would participate in Government decisions

regarding indigenous peoples. UNFPA has also assisted a council of indigenous women of Panama in promoting venues for women's participation in indigenous and women-related affairs.

14. In Paraguay, UNFPA is carrying out a study on the theme "Reproduction anthropology, Mbya humanity", which includes a description of the experiences of the Mbya in sexual and reproductive health care, their myths and culture. Community participation, especially that of Mbya male midwives and traditional women midwives, is being incorporated into the study.

3. Government policies and programmes to safeguard indigenous peoples' equal right to education should be promoted as good practices throughout the United Nations system and Governments should adopt further special measures on education

15. The elimination of gender disparity in primary education is one of the indicators of gender-related Millennium Development Goals. In the UNFPA multi-year funding framework, gender equality and empowerment of women make up one of the main goals. In the follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development, State representatives also agreed on the need for primary education for both sexes and the elimination of gender disparity in enrolment rates.

16. In order to promote gender equality in education, UNFPA has been encouraging countries to adopt gender-sensitive curricula in primary and secondary schools. As a result, many countries have developed materials and curricula related to gender equality and gender-sensitive reproductive health issues and have trained teachers for that purpose.

17. In Bolivia, UNFPA activities have focused on improving the sexual and reproductive health of indigenous people within the framework of a law on education reform. For many years, UNFPA has supported a project aimed at providing literacy skills in Quechua and in Spanish, with information on health and reproductive health and gender equality, which has benefited more than 120,000 indigenous women. The geographical area of the project is located in the departments of Chuquisaca, Potosí and Cochabamba, where female illiteracy reaches 50 per cent.

18. The project implements activities to teach indigenous women in Bolivia how to read and write in Spanish and Quechua within the framework of their own sociocultural realities and concerns, with contents that promote human rights (specifically reproductive rights), safe motherhood, violence prevention and gender equality and equity. The main result of the project has been the empowerment of indigenous women and a reduction in maternal mortality in project areas. Partnerships with other organizations offer income-generating activities to ensure better results, and continuity of the learning centres has been assured. The project has emphasized the respect for traditional values and beliefs, promoting the relevance of cultural diversity, participation and dialogue.

19. In Brazil, the research study carried out by the Universidade Federal do Amazonas had a significant impact on education, since the results pointed to problems and difficulties faced by the Sateré-Mawé. Thanks to the study, indigenous teachers and leaders will be better equipped to negotiate better conditions with official institutions. The information is also important for indigenous schools.

Moreover, a simplified version of the report is being developed and translated by native Brazilian teachers so that the Sateré-Mawé children can learn about their culture.

20. As regards the survival and recovery of the Sateré-Mawé language, research results are having an impact not only on native Brazilians, but also on governmental and non-governmental institutions, since they measure the degree to which the language is being lost in cities and in the indigenous areas inside the Sateré-Mawé territories. To address that trend, Sateré-Mawé teachers will be hired and culture centres will be created in indigenous areas as a means to implement actions to revitalize the Sateré-Mawé language and culture.

21. The low number of birth registrations revealed by the study, especially on indigenous lands, has raised discussions among Sateré-Mawé leaders, who now are able to pressure governmental institutions to introduce birth registry policies targeting indigenous populations. Likewise, findings on low school attendance rates and unsatisfactory health care have given native Brazilians the basis to demand conditions to exercise their citizenship rights.

22. In Guatemala, UNFPA has provided technical assistance to the Ministry of Education for the redesign of curricula to benefit indigenous peoples. Moreover, a study showing that 25 per cent of adolescents between 10 and 14 years of age and 85 per cent of adolescents between 15 and 19 years of age had initiated their sexual life and that a significant number had dropped out of school has led to a partnership with a local non-governmental organization in the Santiago Atitlán, Sololá Province, to provide adolescent indigenous boys and girls with information to prevent unwanted pregnancies and school dropouts.

4. Indigenous healers and cultural perspectives on health and illness should be incorporated into policies, guidelines and programmes

23. In Ecuador, UNFPA has successfully developed the Jambi Huasi health/reproductive health model, which incorporates traditional medicine alongside western obstetric care. The experience includes the active involvement of indigenous people in all decisions, and is increasingly being seen by UNFPA as an effective way to integrate an intercultural perspective into reproductive health, to then be adopted for other indigenous groups in the region. The Jambi Huasi programme offers an opportunity to give reproductive health policies a more multicultural approach.

24. In Chile, UNFPA has provided assistance in the area of population and development, with a focus on the production and dissemination of relevant studies that are expected to have an impact on public policies designed for indigenous populations. A study of experiences in the fields of health, sexuality and reproduction among indigenous people between 1990 and 2004 and another on the impact of the education and health policies of the Aymaras of Chile were carried out with the support of UNFPA.

25. In Guatemala, UNFPA has also been working to improve the reproductive health of indigenous populations. It has supported the Ministry of Public Health in the implementation of a national programme aimed at providing indigenous people with information and services so that they may exercise their reproductive rights and voluntarily decide on the number of children they wish to have.

26. In Mexico, from 1997 to 2001, UNFPA worked in 308 municipalities of five states (Chiapas, Guerrero, Hidalgo, Oaxaca and Puebla), which were characterized by the worst sociodemographic and reproductive health indicators and trends. During that period, an estimated 2 million indigenous persons benefited from UNFPA projects, mainly those that sought to improve access to quality, socioculturally and linguistically relevant reproductive health information and services. Different models and materials were developed by public institutions and non-governmental organizations to assist the projects.

27. Through the current 2002-2006 UNFPA country programme, the coverage of the above-mentioned programmes was extended to eight states (Chiapas, Guerrero, Hidalgo, Michoacán, Oaxaca, Quintana Roo, San Luis Potosí and Zacatecas), thus contributing to the institutionalization of the models and strategies.

28. In Panama, UNFPA promoted and assisted the Government and an indigenous women's association in the implementation of a five-year project aimed at improving access to quality information, education and services in the area of sexual and reproductive health, including gender equality. The services, provided in 30 indigenous communities of the districts of Mirono and Nole Duima of the Ngobe people, integrate sociocultural and human rights perspectives, including the respect for cultural norms and beliefs in maternal health. Despite such important advances, there is a need to continue consolidation of such services.

5. Information on the rights of the indigenous peoples should be disseminated in the local languages; indigenous women should be trained in human rights and the rule of law; technical assistance should be given to Governments to establish the fundamental rights of indigenous peoples

29. In Nicaragua, UNFPA has contributed to the promotion of indigenous peoples' rights by:

(a) Strengthening the special ombudsman for indigenous peoples. Support has been limited to targeted technical assistance, revision of workplans, political dialogue and advocacy;

(b) Providing technical assistance to the national commission set up as a follow-up to the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, held in 2001 in Durban, South Africa. The ombudsman for indigenous peoples and other ethnic minorities coordinated the commission, which comprises several national institutions. The UNFPA office supported the Commission with technical assistance and basic logistics;

(c) Providing financial and technical assistance to organize a national forum against racism. In October 2004, a national forum against racism was organized with the financial and technical assistance of UNFPA. More than 100 representatives from various civil society organizations representing different ethnic groups, ministries and other national institutions (such as the national police) participated in a three-day event involving discussions on the factors contributing to racism in the health, educational and legal sectors;

(d) Improving the questionnaire for the national population census for a more accurate depiction of the number of indigenous people and their living conditions. During the preparations for the eighth national population census and the fifth national census on housing, the UNFPA county office worked together with the

national institute for statistics and census in order to improve the information available on indigenous people. The population census was the first to allow for indigenous identity based on self-recognition and to be translated into four indigenous languages (Miskito, Mayagna, Creole and Sumu). UNFPA is confident that the census is a breakthrough that could serve as a model for other countries in the region for measuring ethnicity through a self-recognized identity (i.e. the number of indigenous people that declare themselves indigenous).

30. In the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, UNFPA has provided financial and technical support for the establishment of a community radio programme in partnership with the Wayuu women's network to promote and raise awareness among the indigenous people of their human rights, particularly of their reproductive rights.

31. In Paraguay, UNFPA has helped provide training to a national body of rural and indigenous women in sexual health and reproductive rights, as well as for new young indigenous women leaders, in particular those from rural areas.

6. Technical cooperation and capacity-building programmes on the involvement of indigenous women should be provided

32. Through its regional programme, the Latin America and Caribbean division of UNFPA has funded the Continental Network of Indigenous Women to formulate a plan of action geared to articulating and strengthening the leadership capacities of indigenous women.

C. Obstacles to implementation of recommendations of the Forum or other policies relevant to indigenous peoples

33. In many countries of Latin America and the Caribbean in which UNFPA has been promoting the incorporation of an intercultural perspective into reproductive health services for indigenous women, UNFPA has encountered obstacles from national health systems and health providers themselves, which on many occasions have resisted the incorporation of such a perspective into national programmes. It is through carrying out advocacy initiatives and strengthening the participation of indigenous women themselves that obstacles are now being overcome to varying degrees in different countries. There is a need to emphasize the incorporation of an intercultural perspective into maternal health with Governments if the attainment of Millennium Development Goal 5 is to be achieved, with due respect for human rights, including the reproductive rights, of indigenous women.

34. Most obstacles to the incorporation of the recommendations of the Forum in UNFPA activities have been rooted in national discriminatory attitudes and practices towards indigenous peoples from national Governments and specifically from the health and education systems of such countries.

D. Other recent policies, programmes and activities on indigenous issues within the United Nations Population Fund

35. Since 2000, UNFPA has adopted a culturally sensitive approach to its programmes that furthers human rights through the understanding and respect of

cultures, which are crucial when dealing with indigenous issues and assisting the implementation of the recommendations of the Forum. In all regions, UNFPA has assisted the organization of gender, culture and human rights workshops in order to discuss and better implement this new approach in its programmes worldwide.

36. In the Latin American workshop held in December 2005, a segment was dedicated to multiculturalism and identity. UNFPA strategies were identified for the implementation of population initiatives with a cultural approach.

E. Information and suggestions for the fifth session of the Forum

37. The definition of indigenous-based indicators for measuring the attainment of Millennium Development Goals in each country should be agreed upon and officially included in the guidelines for the preparation of national reports, particularly by countries which have a significant indigenous population. Side events on the contribution of the United Nations bodies to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, including relevant and proven recommendations, should be welcomed.

F. United Nations Population Fund conferences and meetings on indigenous issues in 2006

38. In 2006, the Latin America and Caribbean division of UNFPA will prepare its regional strategy for indigenous people. By the end of 2006, UNFPA expects to be able to implement it among its country offices in collaboration with national Governments and indigenous groups.

II. United Nations country team in Ecuador

[Original: Spanish]

Summary

This report presents the framework for coordination of the agencies of the United Nations system in Ecuador and the inter-agency initiatives related to indigenous people, with reference to the Common Country Assessment (CCA 2002) and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). The CCA recognizes inequality and exclusion as structural causes of poverty. UNDAF identifies three substantive areas of cooperation: poverty reduction through access to quality basic social services and productive activities; ensuring environmental sustainability; and strengthening democratic governance and transparency. Gender and intercultural factors are cross-cutting targets in this cooperation.

A. Cooperation framework

39. In the context of United Nations reform, Ecuador is one of the pilot countries in the region where the harmonizing of views, strategies and actions and the simplification of procedures is going forward. The Common Country Assessment (CCA) of the United Nations system in Ecuador in 2002 highlighted the need to work to reduce inequalities and exclusion in the economic, social, ethnic and gender spheres. The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) incorporates in its strategies and actions an intercultural and gender perspective aimed at reducing these inequalities.

40. In order to implement the incorporation of the intercultural perspective in UNDAF programming, the United Nations country team organized a system of lead agencies and inter-agency working groups. One of the groups established is the intercultural theme group, chaired by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), in which the focal points of the United Nations agencies participate in an effort to harmonize views, knowledge and experience in their work with indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian peoples and develop and implement an annual work plan agreed by the agencies. The following agencies are part of the theme group: UNFPA, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR), the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO), the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

41. This practice of coordination among agencies at the country level is in keeping with the United Nations reform as well as the mandate of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues to raise awareness and promote the integration and coordination of all activities related to indigenous issues within the United Nations system.

B. Coordination of United Nations agencies in Ecuador

42. The intercultural theme group conducted a mapping exercise on the situation of indigenous peoples and Afro-Ecuadorians and of existing organizations, which highlighted the gap between the indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian peoples and the rest of the population in respect of access to basic goods and social services, participation and political power. The information was compiled with the participation of indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian leaders invited by the United Nations system to contribute to the drafting of the report on the situation, as the basis for planning of inter-agency cooperation. The group also produced a policy document for the United Nations system on intercultural matters, which will be reviewed and adopted by the country team.

43. The United Nations system is working on the dissemination of the national report on the Millennium Development Goals. To that end, in coordination with the Council for the Development of the Nations and Peoples of Ecuador, it held a meeting with indigenous leaders, including members of Parliament, to present the report and gather their proposals for including, in a visible and specific manner, the

situation of indigenous peoples in the country. To facilitate the dissemination of the Goals among the indigenous people, the national report on the Goals, to be issued in 2006, was translated into Quechua, and material was prepared for distribution in other native languages. UNDP and PAHO, through a special social research centre, conducted preliminary activities for the incorporation of an intercultural perspective in the provincial reports on the Goals.

44. In the context of the intercultural theme group, some agencies of the system signed a cooperation agreement with the Provincial Council of Chimborazo to provide technical and financial assistance in the three areas defined by UNDAF. For the intercultural theme group, this agreement represents the possibility of developing an inter-agency cooperation process at the local level in the province that has the highest indigenous population in the country.

C. Cooperation among United Nations agencies in Ecuador

45. Inter-agency activities are aimed at the three areas of cooperation defined by UNDAF: poverty reduction and access to basic social services; environmental sustainability; and governance and transparency. In these three areas, United Nations agencies are implementing various projects, some of which are being jointly implemented with the indigenous peoples and nations of Ecuador.

Poverty reduction and access to basic social services

Education

46. During 2005, UNESCO conducted various activities and projects in the areas of literacy and intercultural and bilingual education, by organizing two educational workshops for the strengthening of indigenous languages, in coordination with the National Directorate for Bilingual Intercultural Education, through support to the Literacy and Education for Life Programme of Cayambe Canton (over 500 students), the execution of the Literacy and Education for Life Programme in Cuyabeno Canton (110 students), support to the establishment of the pedagogical proposal for the Amawtay Wasy Intercultural University and support to the Indigenous Parliament of America in signing a resolution on the impact of education on the economic, social and intercultural development of indigenous peoples, which was adopted by the General Assembly of the Organization of American States.

47. Under the agreement between the United Nations and the Provincial Council of Chimborazo, UNICEF provided access for girls and boys to basic education through the implementation of the Sílabas programme, through which 5,182 five-year-olds in the province received textbooks. The fact that these textbooks were free of charge helped to ensure access to basic education for boys and girls, especially those whose parents could not afford textbooks because of their low income, which put their children's access to schooling at risk.

Health

48. The inclusion of intercultural aspects in health services is a deeply felt need in the country. To support the Ministry of Health in the adoption of intercultural policies, support was provided for standardizing and disseminating at the national and international level the experience of Jambi Huasi intercultural maternal health

centres, with the participation of delegates from Bolivia, Peru, Panama and Ecuador and the collaboration of UNFPA, UNICEF, UNIFEM, PAHO, Family Care International and the Quality Assurance Project. Based on that concrete experience with a 10-year history, an effort was made to promote the adoption of health policies with an intercultural perspective.

49. The sexual and reproductive health of indigenous peoples also received attention from UNFPA, in the provinces of Orellana and Chimborazo, through activities to promote health at the community level, particularly with reference to the implementation of the Free Maternity and Child Care Act.

Rural development

50. At the end of 2005, FAO began a project aimed at strengthening indigenous organizations and at restoring the importance of traditional products in the high Andean regions of Bolivia, Peru and Ecuador, which is being developed in the province of Chimborazo. Its main objectives are to strengthen skills in productive organization and to promote traditional products and techniques aimed at improving food and nutritional levels among the indigenous population in the Chimborazo region.

Sociodemographic and health information

51. The use and dissemination of sociodemographic information in towns with indigenous mayors, through the Information System on Indigenous Peoples involves strengthening local planning capacities with UNFPA and UNICEF support.

52. The sociodemographic, maternal and infant health survey conducted in 2004 is an information tool that assists in the adoption of health and education policies in the country. This survey was run by the Ministry of Health, the National Institute of Statistics and Census and the Centre for Population and Social Development Studies. It received support from UNFPA, UNICEF, PAHO, the Inter-American Development Bank and the United States Agency for International Development. For the first time the survey has disaggregated information by ethnic group, showing the gaps in sexual and reproductive health levels between the indigenous and non-indigenous populations.

Environmental sustainability

53. The UNDP Small Grants Programme has supported various indigenous organizations in 14 sustainable development projects dealing with natural resource management, agro-environmental ecosystem management, ecotourism and the promotion of productive farming. Of the these projects, three are national and 11 operate in the following provinces: Azuay, Cotopaxi, Guayas, Imbabura, Orellana, Pastaza, Pichincha and Sucumbios.

Governance

54. In the good-governance sphere, UNIFEM promoted the leadership of indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian women, increasing their participation in public spaces and decision-making with several supports: the IX ordinary congress of the National Federation of Peasant, Indigenous and Black Organizations (FENOCIN), and national level workshops with the National Council of Indigenous Women of

Ecuador in collaboration with the National Council for Women (CONAMU). It also supported the participation of indigenous women in international events: the fourth session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and the Latin American and Caribbean Encounter of Rural Women. In the same line, UNIFEM also implemented a project of training for trainers on the Manual of Human Rights and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women with the participation of young indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian women in Pichincha, Guaranda, Riobamba and Esmeraldas.

55. UNDP, working in the framework of the Human Rights Strengthening (HURIST) Programme, a joint project with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR), carried out various activities in 2005, such as support for the dissemination of information about the establishment of Amawtay Wasy Intercultural University and for the organization of workshops to prepare participants for the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. Furthermore, UNDP signed an agreement with the National Directorate for the Defence of Indigenous Peoples and the National Directorate for Bilingual Intercultural Education aimed at the dissemination of information on collective rights.

56. The UNHCHR Andean project for the protection of the rights of peoples of indigenous and African descent, a pilot project for Ecuador, Bolivia and Peru, is being carried out with the support of the UNDP team in Ecuador. Under this project, a human rights training programme was carried out in Ecuador, along with advisory services for the assessment of the need for training in the human rights of indigenous communities.

Gender issues

57. In the thematic area of violence against indigenous women, UNIFEM in Ecuador developed several activities: (a) with the National Council of Indigenous Women of Ecuador it conducted several workshops with the objective of disseminating Law 103 on violence against women and the family; (b) through the campaign of 16 days of activism on violence against women, the indigenous population of Cotacachi became sensitized, with the participation of the local government; (c) with UNFPA and UNHCHR a collaboration agreement was signed to work in the border area of the province of Sucumbíos, with displaced women; and (d) with UNFPA, a collaboration agreement was made in the Amazonian provinces of Sucumbíos and Orellana aimed at enhancing the management of women in provincial and municipal authorities, as well as the participation and empowerment of peasant women and native organizations.

Children and youth

58. In 2005 UNICEF provided technical and financial assistance to the Confederation of Quechua Peoples of Ecuador and the Indigenous Parliament of America, aimed at developing intercultural public policies focused on children and youth. This included a process in which children participated and were consulted so as to develop a minimum agenda for protecting the rights of indigenous children and youth in Ecuador. Four thousand children and youth participated directly, as did 2,900 indigenous leaders of 14 nations and 16 peoples from the coastal, mountain and Amazon regions and from shanty-towns around Guayaquil, Machala, Quito and Santo Domingo.

59. These activities led to: (a) A minimum agenda with four pillars: land, identity and culture; health and nutrition; education; and social welfare; (b) political will aimed at implementing the agenda starting in fiscal year 2006; (c) identification and/or development of leadership skills in indigenous children and youth; (d) inclusion of the topic of the rights of children and youth in the agendas of the main indigenous organizations of the country; and (e) advocacy of the rights of indigenous children and youth with decision-makers and various other civil society groups in Ecuador.

D. Coordination with the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

60. The United Nations system has worked in various ways in Ecuador to coordinate with the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, for example by providing support to prepare the participation of Ecuador's indigenous delegation; disseminating information on the Millennium Development Goals and the recommendations of the fourth session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues to indigenous organizations and to the country team; and sharing information on the seminar on alternative forms of indigenous governance held in Ecuador by the secretariat of the Forum.

Preparation for participation in the fourth session of the Forum

61. UNDP and the United Nations Volunteers implemented a project in 2003-2004 on technical assistance to the International Relations Unit of the Council for the Development of the Nation and Peoples of Ecuador. In that connection, information meetings were held to prepare indigenous people to participate in a number of international forums, including the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

62. In 2005, the joint programme between the Human Rights Strengthening (HURIST) Programme, UNDP and UNHCR held a number of information and preparation workshops with the Ecuadorian indigenous delegation to the fourth session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. Representatives of UNIFEM and UNFPA also took part in these workshops. The workshops provided information on the mandate of the Permanent Forum, the Millennium Development Goals and logistical and organizational topics.

Participation in the fourth session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

63. Two members of the intercultural theme group participated in the fourth session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. The UNFPA representative and the Coordinator of the Andean Project of UNHCHR participated in side activities, on the one hand, and in follow-up to HURIST activities, on the other. The mandate of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues was then presented to the members of the intercultural theme group and the UNDP team in Ecuador.

Dissemination of the recommendations of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

64. On the International Day of the World's Indigenous People, a workshop was held to disseminate the recommendations of the fourth session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, in which the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Ecuador and Dr. Nina Pacari participated.

65. The country team held a working breakfast with Dr. Nina Pacari, an expert from the Permanent Forum, to discuss the agencies' contribution to the implementation of the Forum's recommendations. The team agreed to prepare a joint work plan for 2006, in which priority would be given to the following topics: dissemination of the Forum's recommendations, the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People, the Millennium Development Goals and the promotion of collective rights. Dr. Pacari pointed out that the Goals should include indigenous peoples' views, together with disaggregated statistics to demonstrate the exclusion of these peoples.

Seminar on alternative governments

66. In 2005, the secretariat of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues organized a seminar in Ecuador on strengthening alternative local governments. This activity will be followed up in close coordination with the country team and the intercultural theme group.

I. Strengthening United Nations system coordination in Ecuador

67. Since its inception a year ago, the intercultural theme group has carried out a number of activities with the United Nations system to ensure the incorporation of an intercultural approach in its programmes and projects and the coherence of the system in its actions for the benefit of Ecuador, in particular its indigenous peoples and nationals and the Afro-Ecuadorian people.

68. In addition to attending the fourth session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the intercultural theme group also participated in the meeting of the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Issues, held in Panama City in September 2005, and contributed to the discussions from the perspective of national-level United Nations coordination. The theme group thus helped to coordinate United Nations activities not only at the national level, but also at the regional and international levels.

69. The inter-agency agreement signed with the provincial council of Chimborazo will enable some United Nations bodies to implement their commitment to inter-agency cooperation at the local level. UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA will continue to work together to devise methodologies, working methods and tools to create and manage local development agendas, which will take the form of plans for equity and local competitiveness. PAHO will continue its technical support to the cantonal and provincial health council.

70. The participating agencies are committing themselves, on a priority basis, to a plan for equity and local competitiveness in Chimborazo, a province with a high incidence of indigenous people and problems such as poverty, migration and depleted natural resources. This plan will allow the local governments and civil society to come to an agreement on the thrust of future collective action in the context of territorial unity, on the short, medium and long term, in four key dimensions that are highly interdependent: (a) governance; (b) adequate human capital; (c) basic infrastructure; and (d) competitive development of production.

71. The plan for equity and local competitiveness in Chimborazo for the most part will involve endogenous development within the territory. Its aim is to take

advantage of the region's own potential resources — natural, human, institutional and organizational — to change local social and productive structures in order to improve the quality of life of the people. The plan will be linked to national policies.

72. The intercultural theme group of the United Nations system in Ecuador will enter its second year of activity faced with the challenge of strengthening its efforts to promote coordination and the incorporation of an intercultural approach. Coordination with the United Nations system, the regional offices of the agencies and international mechanisms and forums, such as the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the Working Group on Indigenous Populations and the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people, is crucial to ensuring that country-level cooperation, including the preparation of joint programmes and projects, is more effective and conducive to implementing international recommendations.

V. Conclusions

73. The experience of coordination among United Nations agencies in Ecuador in order to foster the inclusion of an intercultural perspective in their work in support of indigenous people has been very positive and is promoting not only concerted actions but also a convergence of approaches and working methods. The theme group is a mechanism that has helped to operationalize the content of the Common Country Assessment and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (CCA/UNDAF) in relation to indigenous people.

74. Besides this positive experience, there have also been some setbacks in terms of support to national indigenous peoples' institutions and organizations on the basis of their own views and priorities, and in terms of the United Nations system itself and the capacities of its agencies to understand and address cultural and ethnic diversity.

75. The international agenda no doubt offers a framework for considering intercultural relations as a matter of human rights, recognition of diversity, governance and inclusion. The Millennium Development Goals are a reference point for focusing United Nations action on reducing gaps in social equity, including those of gender and ethnicity.

76. The Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and its recommendations also provide guidance in harmonizing the agendas of indigenous people, governments and international cooperation. Our aim is to contribute, on the basis of our specific mandates and inter-agency activities, to the implementation of these recommendations.

77. Lastly, we urge the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues to study the experience of United Nations agencies in coordination at the national level, in particular with regard to indigenous people. The Forum could make specific recommendations on how to strengthen this work, taking into account what the United Nations system has accomplished thus far in Ecuador.